



Traffic Safety
News and Facts for Employers
May 1, 2006

NETS Feature

Truck Safety

The Michigan Center for Truck Safety is researching the purchase of a truck simulator for statewide safety training. The Center will have an L-3 mobile simulator on display on the morning of May 10 at its office at 1131 Centennial Way, Lansing, MI, and interested parties are invited to view this model. The Center is also seeking partnerships in developing this project. To inquire about the display or partnership opportunities, please contact Michael Irwin, Executive Director of the Center, at (517) 321-1955, ext. 12 or mirwin@truckingsafety.org.

Michigan News

State Police Start Road Rage Online Reporting System

People who see examples of road rage or dangerous driving now can make an online report to state police. State police say the site www.michigan.gov/roadrage provides a way to identify and correct the factors that lead to aggressive driving on a particular road.

Latest Traffic Safety News

Tests Find Side Air Bags Worth The Extra Cost

For motorists seeking greater protection in crashes, test results released by the insurance industry show the benefits of paying for optional side air bags. Versions of the 2006 Toyota Prius and six minivans made by DaimlerChrysler and General Motors that were evaluated without side air bags got poor marks in side-impact tests. The same vehicles, when tested with the optional air bags, all showed improvements, and the Prius earned the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's top score in side protection. Read the full article at http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2006-04-17-crash-tests_x.htm

CDC Releases Lifetime Costs of Injuries

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have released figures that indicate the lifetime cost of injuries occurring in a single year in the United States totals an estimated \$406 billion in medical expenses and productivity losses—including lost wages, fringe benefits, and ability to perform normal household responsibilities. Motor vehicle injuries account for 22% (\$89 billion) of the total costs of injuries.

English-Only Driver's Test Gets The Brakes

A bill in Tennessee that would have required anyone who wanted a driver's license to understand enough English to complete the test was recently derailed. During debate, an amendment was proposed that would have increased — not limited — the number of languages in which the exam could be written. Currently, the exam is available in English, Spanish, Korean and Japanese. Ultimately, the amendment was changed to require only that applicants be able to understand road



signs in English, which is already required by the Department of Safety. Read the full article at <http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060414/NEWS01/604140401>

States Looking At Legislation To Limit On-Board Video Use

Several states are considering enacting laws related to driver distractions, with particular focus on video screens in vehicles. A bill in the New York Senate would forbid drivers from watching video screens while behind the wheel. In Alaska, legislators approved a bill that would forbid drivers from watching television or video monitors while the vehicle is moving. The measure allots for stiffer penalties if the driver causes a crash that kills or injures another person.

GPS Turned Mobile Commercial

Many people find global positioning systems a great navigational tool behind the wheel. And now marketers are finding new ways to reach an audience using the devices. During the past two months, Dunkin' Donuts, Cold Stone Creamery and others began appearing on in-car GPS devices to alert drivers to nearby locations and, in some cases, offer special deals. Read the full article at http://www.brandweek.com/bw/news/recent_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1002384719

Pennsylvania Trucking Assoc. Pushes For Drug Testing Database

The Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association, with the backing of the ATA, is hoping to set up a statewide database of employer records on drivers' drug test results. Several such databases already exist in other states, such as Washington, Oregon, North Carolina and Texas.

'Late' Motorist Uses Device To Change Traffic Lights

A motorist using an electronic device to change traffic lights to green was caught red-handed by police. The driver was pulled over after he was videotaped going through an intersection on his way to work. The officers proceeded, asking about the little box mounted on his dashboard. According to them, the device emits an infrared pulse that triggers traffic lights to change colors. The technology is commonly used by firefighters and ambulance drivers to help them get to their destination quickly. Read the full article at

http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_4628931,00.html

Pioneer Launches "Drive Happier" Ad Campaign

Pioneer Electronics Inc. recently launched its "Drive Happier" advertising campaign. With iPod, Bluetooth and satellite radio capabilities, the campaign does what it says. Beginning this month, the "Drive Happier" campaign will be running on ESPN, Golf Channel, Spike TV, TBS and The History Channel, with three television commercials. The campaign also will be online and in print publications such as Wired, Fortune, Newsweek, and Golf Digest. Read the full article at

http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20060419005762&newsLang=en

Cars That Can Get 100 Miles Per Gallon?

A few small companies will start to offer services and products for converting hybrid cars like the Toyota Prius that currently get around 50 miles per gallon into plug-in hybrids that rely more heavily on electrical power and can get about 100 miles per gallon. Plug-in hybrids have much larger battery packs than standard hybrids--in prototypes, the extra batteries fill up the space where spare tires now reside--and much smaller gas motors. The batteries can be recharged by plugging the car into any wall socket. Read the full article at

http://news.com.com/Coming+soon+Cars+that+get+100+miles+per+gallon/2100-11389_3-6064584.html?type=pt&part=inv&tag=feed&subj=news



10 Worst Foods To Eat While Driving

Hagerty Insurance has revealed the "10 Most Dangerous Foods To Eat While Driving." Researchers rated common foods eaten in cars according to the degree of distraction, degree of difficulty in eating with only one hand on the wheel, and the food's popularity. The top 10 foods include:

1. Coffee
2. Hot soups
3. Tacos
4. Chili
5. Burgers
6. Barbequed foods
7. Fried chicken
8. Jelly or cream-filled doughnuts
9. Soft drinks
10. Chocolate

Work-Life:

Organization Pushes Railroad Safety Among Bicyclists

In the wake of the controversy surrounding bicyclists who cycled around railroad crossing gates to cross in front of a train during the Paris-Roubaix cycling race, Operation Lifesaver (OL)—a national nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating deaths and injuries at railroad crossings—is urging bicyclists to ride safely when at railroad crossings or near train tracks. Last year, more than 880 people were killed or injured in the U.S. while illegally walking, bicycling, or otherwise playing on railroad tracks or property. Read the full article at

http://www.oli.org/news/press_release_detail.php?press_release_ID=136

News from the USDOT:

Study Evaluates Driver Distractions And Near-Misses

NHTSA released a report analyzing driver inattention using the driving data collected in the 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study. An additional database of baseline epochs was reduced from the raw data and used in conjunction with the crash and near-crash data identified as part of the original 100-Car Study to account for exposure and establish near-crash/crash risk. According to analyses presented in the report, there is a direct relationship between driving behavior and crash and near-crash involvement. View the report at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-13/driver-distraction/PDF/DriverInattention.pdf>

FMCSA To Hold Public Listening Sessions

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will be conducting two Public Listening Sessions this summer. The meetings are intended to continue dialogue on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (NRCME) program for interstate commercial motor vehicle drivers and the comprehensive review of Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations medical standards. For more information visit: <http://www.nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/>.

NHTSA Releases Preliminary Injury, Fatality Projections

NHTSA has released preliminary projections on motor vehicle traffic crash fatalities and injuries during 2005. According to a preliminary report, 43,200 died on the nation's highways in 2005, up from 42,636 in 2004. Injuries dropped from 2.79 million in 2004 to 2.68 million in 2005, a decline of 4.1 percent.



Fifty-five percent of passenger vehicle occupants who died in 2005 were unbelted. NHTSA also found safety belt use is at 82 percent nationwide.

International Traffic Safety News:

Drivers Warned About Transporting Pets

Company car drivers should be encouraged to restrain pets they carry in cars, according to the UK's largest leasing company. The warning follows the results of a survey that found three-quarters of company car drivers receive no safety guidance from their employers when transporting pets. In a 30 mph crash, an unrestrained pet could be thrown around the vehicle and could also cause the driver to be distracted.

Motorists At Risk During Breakdowns

Research shows that thousands of company car drivers are risking their lives every year, because they don't know what to do or choose to ignore safety advice in the event of a breakdown. Among the worst errors business drivers have made are sitting in the car on the hard shoulder and wandering alone on badly lit back streets.